

The Washington Post _____
 The New York Times _____
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 The Wall Street Journal _____
 The Christian Science Monitor _____
 New York Daily News _____
 USA Today _____
 The Chicago Tribune _____
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Secret Agency Devises Plan for Post-Attack Government
 WASHINGTON (AP) - A super-secret agency run by the White House devised an alternative plan of presidential succession if a nuclear attack eliminated the national leadership, according to a televised report.

In a one-hour telecast Sunday night, CNN's Special Assignment team said the National Program Office, or NPO, was authorized in a secret 1982 directive issued by President Reagan and remains barely known.

It said George Bush, then vice president, was placed in charge of the office, and that White House national security aide Oliver L. North was instrumental in setting up the covert project, which he discussed briefly in his recently published book, "Under Fire."

The NPO's mission is make sure that a civilian leadership remains in place after a nuclear attack. If all 17 officials in the constitutional line of succession to the president are incapacitated, CNN said, the plan provides for others - both elected and non-elected officials, to take over.

It said that among those in the alternative succession pool at one time were former White House chief of staff Howard Baker, former CIA Director Richard Helms, former U.N. Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick and former Energy Secretary James Schlesinger.

The office devised a network of bunkers and mobile shelters for use by the top leadership in the event of attack, spending \$8 billion on the Presidential Support System that included a nuclear-resistant communications system, CNN said. It said that as recently as last winter, officials could not get the system to work.

The House Armed Services Committee and the Army began investigating contract irregularities in the NPO in 1987, CNN said. Tom Golden, then with NPO, told the network that after cooperating with investigators, he himself became the subject of four separate probes, which the committee and the Army determined was retaliation.